REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants are furnishing herewith a SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION – CLEAN VERSION which corresponds with the SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION – MARKED UP VERSION filed with other application papers on January 4, 2006. The cover page certifies that this newly submitted Substitute Specification contains no new matter. The submission is now in full compliance with 37 CFR 1.125 (b) and (c).

In response to the Office Action of December 17, 2007, objected to claims 6-9 and 11 have been amended wherein claim 6 is now written in independent format and contains all the limitations of claims 1 and 5. Claims 7-9 and 11 have also been amended so they are directly or indirectly dependent from new independent claim 6.

Accordingly, claims 6-9 and 11 should now be in condition for allowance and notification of the same is courteously solicited.

Claim 2, rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, in the use of "drop in potential" has been corrected by introducing the replacement language –a power outage-- Specific support for this replacement language can be found at page 1, line 18 of Par. [0003] of the Substitute Specification. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 2 on formal grounds should now be obviated.

At Par. 7 of the Office Action, claims 1-5, 10, 12-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Hase et al (US Pat. App. Pub. 2001/0030739). This ground of rejection is courteously traversed as it applies to the claims now presented for further examination.

Hase et al, contrary to the Office Action, do not teach all the structural features of independent claim 1. For example, the Office Action urges that Hase et al teach the stage being provided with a plurality of air nozzles. However, this is not a correct statement. **More accurately, reference 47 of Hase et al denotes a flow path for supplying a lubricating gas to gas bearing 46 located in housing 18 for optical components of an illumination system.**

Hase et al fail to teach wafer stage 35 as being air cushioned and provided with a plurality of air nozzles according to Applicants' claim 1.

In sum, Hase et al is quite irrelevant to the claims of the subject application. It is not a wafer inspection device, but instead is an exposure apparatus. The stage (35) carries the wafer

(W) onto which the reticle (R) is projected, but there are no air nozzles, as provided by claim 1 or claims dependent therefrom.

Claims 2-5 and 10, 12-13 are dependent from claim 1, and include the features of claim 1, including the air-cushioned stage, not taught by Hase et al.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5, 10 and 12-13 are courteously requested.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks distinguishing over the art of record, this application should now be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Howard M. Ellis
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25856
(716)626-1564